



## FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION IS A CRIME & THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY CAN HELP

If you think you or someone you know has been the victim of financial abuse, the State's Attorney's Office is here to help. Elder financial abuse is widespread and growing. No one really knows how much money is lost this way, but any amount is too much. The good news is that *Maryland law makes it a crime to financially exploit "vulnerable adults" (those who are unable to manage their daily needs due to mental or physical disability) and those 68 and older.*

### Signs of possible financial abuse:

- New spending patterns, increased use of credit &/or debit card
- Purchase of expensive, uncharacteristic items (e.g., car by a person who doesn't drive)
- Change in ability to pay bills, bounced checks
- Presence of new "friends," relatives, caretakers, companions, especially if much younger & person speaks for the senior &/or keeps others away
- Revisions to wills, powers of attorney, other legal or financial documents, such as changes to account beneficiaries
- Suspension of usual activities, social isolation

### Who's committing the crime?

- It can be a staff member at a care facility who is able to cozy up to a resident to get jewelry, money, or power of attorney
- It can be family members who believe they are entitled to an inheritance before their parents or grandparents pass away
- It can be a stranger. Con artists prey on older people because, as a group, they control a large amount of money

If you suspect that you or someone you know is the victim of financial exploitation, report your concerns. The people committing these crimes need to be caught and punished. Do not assume that someone has already reported a suspicious situation.

**If you think you or someone else has been the victim of financial abuse, the State's Attorney's Office is here to help**

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